

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTEV 04004 191917Z
ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4521
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AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
HQ, USSOUTHCOM SCJ2

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 4004

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, PGOV, UY
SUBJ: TODMAN VISIT: FIRST DAY IN MONTEVIDEO

1. SUMMARY. ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN'S FIRST DAY IN MONTEVIDEO WAS FAST-PACED AND RIGOROUS, WITH EXTENSIVE CONTACT WITH MILITARY OFFICERS WHO DOMINATE GOU DECISION MAKING. MEETING WITH CINCS, LUNCH AND TWO-HOUR POST LUNCH DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ROVIRA AND HIS INVITEES, AND DINNER FOR INTIRE JUNTA OF GENERAL OFFICERS PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO REITERATE THEIR "WE ARE MIS-UNDERSTOOD" LINE, AND FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY EFFECTIVELY TO CLARIFY OUR POSITIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, CUBA, THE PANAMA CANAL, AND OTHER ISSUES. OHTER USEFUL EXCHANGES WERE HELD WITH PRESIDENT MENDEZ, COUNCIL OF STATE COMMITTEES, AND AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN. END SUMMARY.

2. FIRST SUBSTANTIVE EVENT WAS MEETING WITH FONMIN ROVIRA AND ADVISORS, GOU LINE WAS SUBSTANTIALLY A REPLAY OF GRENADA, WITH ROVIRA ATTRIBUTING NATION'S NEGATIVE IMAGE
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PAGE 02 MONTEV 04004 191917Z

ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO ORCHESTRATED INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN, AND JUSTIFYING SECURITY MEASURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ANOTHER CUBA. DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN POLICY ALVARO ALVAREZ REPEATED HIS IMPASSIONED ATTACK ON "POLITICIZED AND PARTIAL" IAHC. IN RESPONSE, TODMAN EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO IAHC, NEED FOR GOU TO BE RESPONSIVE TO INQUIRIES FROM INTERNATIONAL BODIES, AND OUR VIEW THAT ONLY A CHANGE

IN URUGUAY'S IMAGE (THROUGH IMPROVED HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE) CAN ENABLE US TO IMPROVE RELATIONS AS BOTH NATIONS DESIRE. TODMAN ALSO TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS PANAMA CANAL TREATY. TODMAN ASKED FOR GOU SUPPORT WHICH MOST EFFECTIVELY COULD BE EXTENDED PUBLICLY THROUGH ITS EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. ROVIRA SAID HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO OFFER GOU SUPPORT.

3. PLANNED FIFTEEN-MINUTE PROTOCOLARY CALL ON PRESIDENT MENDEZ RAN ONE HOUR PLUS, AS MENDEZ DETAILED URUGUAY'S RECENT HISTORY OF SUFFERING AND STRIFE, WHICH TRAUMATIZED DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT. HE THEN HELD FORTH AT LENGTH ON POLITICAL THEORY OF PURIFIED DEMOCRATIC CONCEPT (THREE-BRANCH SYSTEM, WITH DOMINANT EXECUTIVE) EXPECTED TO EMERGE FROM NEW CONSTITUTION AND TO BE IMPLANTED BY 1981 ELECTIONS.

4. MEETING WITH CINCS WAS A GRINDING TWO-HOUR GIVE-AND-TAKE, WITH COMMANDERS PRESSING FAMILIAR LINE THAT U.S. DOESN'T UNDERSTAND URUGUAY AND DEFENDING GOVERNMENT ACTIONS. TODMAN COUNTERED WITH DETAILED EXPLANATION OF U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POSITION, DRAWING EXTENSIVELY ON CHRISTOPHER BAR ASSOCIATION SPEECH.

5. LENGTHY POST-LUNCHEON DISCUSSION WITH SOME 20 FONMINISTRY OFFICIALS, MEDIA DIRECTOR, AND RANKING MILITARY FIGURES WAS DOMINATED BY LATTER, WHO PRESSED HARD ON CONTRADICTIONS THEY SEE IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. THEY ALSO PLAYED HEAVILY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MONTEV 04004 191917Z

ON THEME THAT U.S. HAD TURNED ITS BACK ON A TRADITIONAL ALLY AT MOMENT OF CRISIS. IN TURN, TODMAN PRESENTED RATIONALE FOR OUR CUBAN POLICY AND EXPLAINED FULLY THE THREE CARDINAL POINTS OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POSITION.

6. DURATION OF ABOVE DISCUSSION WAS SUCH AS TO WASH OUT PLANNED MEETING WITH GOU ECONOMIC TEAM. TODMAN PROCEEDED DIRECTLY TO ESSENTIALLY PROTOCOLARY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL OF STATE AND TWO COUNCIL COMMITTEES (FOREIGN RELATIONS AND RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS). USEFUL EXCHANGE WITH AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN (COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS) AND COCKTAIL PARTY AT HOME OF PAO FOR WIDE RANGE OF NON-OFFICIAL URUGUAYANS FOLLOWED. DAY ENDED WITH DINNER FOR FONMIN, CINCS, AND SOME FIFTEEN ADDITIONAL RANKING OFFICERS COMPRISING JUNTA OF GENERAL OFFICERS. WARM AND HUMOR LADEN TOASTS REFLECTED FRANK AND INFORMAL TONE OF DINNER, WHERE DISCUSSIONS DEVELOPED IN SMALL GROUP FORMAT.

7. COMMENT: GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND PARTICULARLY CRITICAL MILITARY ELEMENTS (WHO RECEIVED BULK OF TODMAN'S ATTENTION DURING DAY), APPEARED IMPRESSED BY FRANKNESS AND OPENNESS OF DIALOGUE AND FLATTERED BY ATTENTION OF

LONG-AWAITED VISIT. EXPLANATIONS OF OUR POSITIONS ON CUBA, PANAMA CANAL, AND HUMAN RIGHTS APPEARED TO PENETRATE. HOWEVER, IN SPITE OF TODMAN'S REITERATION OF FACT THAT IT IS URUGUAY'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE WHICH IS DAMAGING OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, MANY DISCUSSION PARTICIPANTS APPEAR TO HANG TO BELIEF THAT TAKING (AND REPEATING) THEIR CASE TO THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY WAS TELLING IT TO THE WORLD. WE CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT URUGUAYAN MILITARY ARE CONFUSED AND UNCERTAIN AS TO HOW TO RESTORE THEIR INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. HOWEVER, WE DO SENSE A GROWING BELIEF ON THEIR PART THAT THEY ARE AT LEAST THINKING THAT SOMETHING MUST BE DONE. TODMAN'S VISIT HAS REINFORCED THIS ATTITUDE. LARGE CROWDS GREETED TODMAN AT MANY CALLS AND WERE UNUSUALLY WARM AND DEMONSTRATIVE FOR THIS TRADITIONALLY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MONTEV 04004 191917Z

TACITURN SOCIETY. THEIR SHOUTS OF GREETINGS TO TODMAN AND CHEERS FOR THE UNITED STATES CLEARLY WERE CALCULATED TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. PEZZULLO

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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